

Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, October 21, 2011

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Action Item Calendar

Today! (October 21): Districts should determine best way to capture class rosters
Monday (October 24): Student enrollment and addresses due
Thursday (October 27): School Safety and Mitigation Conference registration form due
October 31: Beginning teacher information due
October 31: PLP initial data collection due
November 1: Submission and snapshot reports due
November 14: At-home instructed, June graduating class, noncertified staff reports due
November 15: Deadline for final selections of district teachers of the year
December 1: Districts verify all personnel assignments
December 1: For TCS, Districts should clarify model to determine “contributing educators”
June 30, 2012: Schools and districts submit final personnel assignments

Notes from Commissioner Gist:

1. RIPEC, Annenberg invite superintendents to Town Forum with Education Secretary Arne Duncan

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan will be visiting Rhode Island on November 2 for a Town Hall Meeting. Sponsored by the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, this event will be a wonderful opportunity for students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community members to join in on the discussion about education reform on the state and national levels. Please share this information with your teachers, administration, and community; we have sent this information to your principals as well. Details and RSVP information below:

“Town Hall Meeting”
With
The United States Secretary of Education
Arne Duncan
November 2, 2011

The Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council (RIPEC) is pleased to invite you to a Town Hall Meeting featuring United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, to be held on November 2.

Co-sponsored by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, the meeting will be held at the Providence Career and Technical Academy, 41 Fricker Ave., Providence.

The meeting will run 3:15 - 4:15 p.m. Secretary Duncan will offer brief remarks and respond to questions from a panel of education and community leaders, followed by questions from the audience.

I hope you will be able to join us to hear from Secretary Duncan and that the discussion will provide additional insight into the future of education and the changing federal role.

If you plan to attend, RSVP no later than **Wednesday** (October 26) to Marguerite Paredes by email (m_paredes@ripec.com) or by calling her at 521-6320.

Thank you.

2. PISA seeks participation from Rhode Island high schools; nominations due Friday, October 28

As I mentioned in my memo to you last week, I am excited about a special opportunity that we have for high schools in Rhode Island that would like to participate in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)-based Test for Schools pilot. Participation in the PISA would give us incredible information about student performance in our state as measured against the best students in the country and in the world.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which is developing the PISA-based Test for Schools, wants to see a variety of different schools to participate, including rural, suburban, and urban schools from all participating states.

I very much want to nominate Rhode Island high schools to participate in this important initiative. The organizing group would like to have nominations in hand by next **Friday, October 28**. Please let me know as soon as possible of your interest in participating as a pilot district in the PISA-based Test for Schools.

A Web site about this pilot test is up and running, and you can access the site here:

<http://www.schoolassessment.org/>

On this site, you will find:

- an Executive Summary;
- Frequently Asked Questions;
- a brief video about main PISA;
- how to nominate districts or networks; and
- (coming soon) an application for districts and networks.

I hope for a large contingent of participants from Rhode Island, and I will be following up with phone calls to ensure that Rhode Island is represented in this program.

3. LEAs asked to select 2012 District Teacher of the Year

Several of you have taken advantage of the streamlined application for selection of a 2012 District Teacher of the Year. The process for the selection of the 2012 Rhode Island Teacher of the Year is moving along successfully and is closed to new nominations; however, if you have not done so already I strongly encourage you to select a 2012 District Teacher of the Year. Selection of a Teacher of the Year will be a great way to honor the excellent work that some of our great teachers do every day. At our annual celebration of great teaching, which we plan to hold in the spring, I would love to be able to recognize a District Teacher of the Year from every LEA in Rhode Island. The streamlined application is available here:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/Recognition/default.aspx>

From RIDE:

4. RIDE to hold meeting to update stakeholders on Race to the Top

Please see this notice from our Race to the Top team:

RIDE will host a meeting entitled *Moving Forward Together with Race to the Top Implementation* for all superintendents, school-board chairs, local union leaders, and charter representatives on Tuesday, December 13, from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., at a location to be determined.

We have asked RISSA, RIASC, RIFTHP, NEARI, and the League of Charter Schools to send out a "save the date" for this meeting. Please be sure to hold the date and feel free to check in with your board chair and union leader to confirm that they are also holding the date.

This meeting will be similar to the district meeting held in June and the charter meeting held in earlier this month, at which we presented information and answered questions about Race to the Top projects. More information on the agenda and location will be forthcoming next month.

5. RIDE holds, schedules webinars on assessment maps and the Comprehensive Assessment System

Please see this notice from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

RIDE hosted a webinar on October 19 on how to use the Assessment Maps in the Comprehensive Assessment System Criteria & Guidance. These tools are designed to help LEAs take stock of their local assessment systems in order to identify gaps and overlaps, identify possible sources of evidence for Student Learning Objectives, and comply with the requirements of the BEP. A follow-up webinar will be held on November 9, from 9:30 -10:30 a.m., to provide guidance on anticipated challenges and

to answer questions about how to use the maps. To access the recorded webinar and to register for upcoming webinars, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/CAS.aspx>

6. Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching nominations now open

Please see this notice from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

Does your district have outstanding elementary (grades K-6) mathematics and science teachers whom you would like to recognize? The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) is the highest honor that a kindergarten through 12th-grade mathematics or science teacher may receive for outstanding teaching in the United States. What better way to acknowledge excellence in your schools than to nominate the teachers who exemplify their profession?

The process to nominate teachers is a simple one. Simply go to the PAEMST Web site (www.paemst.org) and fill in the on-line form. Once the nomination is submitted, the nominated teacher will then be notified and provided information about the application process.

The following are eligibility criteria for nominees. Candidates must:

- teach mathematics or science at the K-6 level in a public or private school;
- hold at least a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution;
- be a full-time employee of the school or school district as determined by state and district policies, and teach K-12 students at least 50 percent of the time;
- have at least 5 years of full-time, K-12 mathematics or science teaching experience prior to the 2011-12 school year;
- teach in one of the 50 states or the four U.S. jurisdictions;
- be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident; and
- not have received the PAEMST award at the national level in any prior competition or category.

Rhode Island has many wonderful teachers, and those you nominate could be state or national Presidential Awardees for Excellence in Teaching Mathematics and Science for 2012.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Peter McLaren, at 222-8454 or by e-mail at peter.mclaren@ride.ri.gov. Thank you for your continued support for mathematics and science education.

7. Deadline for submitting exemption requests for fall NECAP testing is Tuesday

Please see the following message from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

The deadline for submitting requests for student exemption from NECAP testing is **Tuesday** (October 25). All submissions must be submitted through eRIDE, and a signed copy of the "District Assurances Form" (Form 1) must be faxed to 222-3605 no later than 3:00 p.m. To download copies of the necessary forms as well as a copy of the guidance document, which explains the policies and processes for requesting exemption, please go to the RIDE Web site:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment/necap_SASC.aspx

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley (kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov), or 222-8494).

8. Districts asked to verify list of Induction Coaches, beginning teachers

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Last week we had the opportunity for further Induction Program Training by Hillsborough County Public Schools. This district was in a similar situation with a variety of initiatives being rolled out last year. These initiatives did include the New Teacher Center (NTC) Induction Model as well as a newly developed Educator Evaluation Model. We learned many wonderful ways to have these two initiatives complement each other as well as how successful these initiatives are. We are learning from their lessons learned.

A list containing the names of the Induction Coach(es) serving in your district along with the names of the beginning teachers who have been identified by your district will be sent out in the middle of next week. Please verify this list to ensure that no one has been missed. We are asking that you send a copy to each building principal having identified coach support for their verification as well.

As a reminder: The next Role of the Principal Training is set for Tuesday, November 1. In order to better address the needs of principals, we will hold two sessions as originally planned, but one will take place from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. and the afternoon session has changed to 4:30 – 7:30 p.m. It is necessary to register only for one of the two sessions. Charles Hill, who was an administrator for many years and oversees the NTC Leadership Initiative, is the main trainer for this event.

To register for the Role of the Principal Training, please go to:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>.

Registration is required, as we need accurate counts for handouts.

As always, if you have any questions or feedback, do not hesitate to contact Hilda or Donna:

Hilda Potrzeba, at hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov or 222-8891

Donna Okrasinski, at donna.okrasinski@ride.ri.gov or 222-8982

9. RIDE posts information on all Race to the Top projects

Please see this notice from our Race to the Top team:

The Race to the Top team has posted a new resource for LEA leadership to the RIDE Web site:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/commissioner/RaceToTheTop/docs/RTTT%20Projects%20Overview%20for%20LEA%20Leadership%20October%202011.pdf>

This document provides “one-stop shopping” for high-level information – a brief description, data needs, timelines, and what LEAs can do to prepare for implementation – on each of the Race to the Top projects. The document was developed based on questions and feedback from both the Data Team Workgroup and assistant superintendents. Thanks to those groups for their input! This resource is designed to provide an overview to LEA leadership; please share it with your administrative team.

10. Commissioner’s decision addresses student’s assignment to a middle school

Please see this notice from our Legal Office:

The decision below addresses a school district’s response to a parent’s request for an exception to its policy for assigning students to a middle school:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2011/0025-11 D. Doe v. Cumberland S.D. 101911.pdf>

11. October PLP data collection due October 31

Please see this notice from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

To ensure the accuracy and timeliness of reporting, please remind your data managers and PLP Coordinators that Step 1 for PLP Data Collection (*initial list* upload) is due **October 31**. Directions for this data submission may be accessed directly using the following link:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/DOCS/documents/Personal_Literacy_Plan_PLP_Data_Collection_2011-2012.pdf

Please note: The *initial list* upload is required; however, the superintendent sign-off is *not* expected for this upload.

If you need assistance or require additional information about the PLP reporting requirements, please do not hesitate to contact RIDE key personnel:

For program-related questions, please contact Diane Girard, at diane.girard@ride.ri.gov or 222-8479.

For technical questions, please contact the eRIDE HelpDesk, at helpdesk@ride.ri.gov or 222-8400.

12. Student enrollment, addresses report due Monday

Please see this reminder from our Division of Fiscal Integrity and Efficiencies:

We appreciate all the efforts you have made - and are making - to provide accurate and timely data to RIDE. As in the past, RIDE collects critical data throughout the year. Student and staff information collected are generally used to measure student, teacher, school, and district performance; to inform management, budget, and policy decisions; and to comply with state and federal reporting mandates.

To ensure the accuracy and timeliness of reporting, please designate the following responsibilities to your key staff members and make sure each of the following is complete by the deadline dates:

- Student enrollment and addresses must be uploaded to RIDE by **Monday** (October 24) at 3 p.m.
- Submission and Snapshot reports must be reviewed and faxed or e-mailed to RIDE Tuesday, November 1, at 3 p.m.
- At-home-instructed, June graduating-class, and noncertified-staff reports are due to RIDE Monday, November 14, at 3 p.m.

Your data are to be submitted for your district and schools through the RIDE Information Services Portal page (<http://www.eride.ri.gov/>). For detailed information, click on State Reporting on the left-hand side; you will see a list of scheduled reports or data that are either open or closed for submission, as well as detailed instructions on how to submit each report.

If you need assistance or require additional information about the reporting requirements, please do not hesitate to contact the RIDE Help Desk, at 222-8400 or helpdesk@ride.ri.gov. Deanna Raphael is the RIDE contact.

13. Registration open for Rhode Island Educator Evaluation Model training

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Only two sessions remain for Module 2 for Personnel Evaluating Building Administrators. Both sessions are scheduled for **Wednesday** (October 26), at 8:30-11:30 a.m. and 12:30 - 3:30 p.m., at the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative. Evaluators can register by going to the eRIDE Workshop calendar, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>.

Registration for Module 3 for Personnel Evaluating Teachers is now open. We have scheduled multiple sessions between **Monday** (October 24) and December 8. The training will focus on conducting classroom observations, analyzing non-observable evidence, conducting conferences, and delivering feedback. Evaluators can register by going to the eRIDE Workshop calendar, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>

14. RIDE release educator-evaluation training session exit-survey results

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to complete the exit surveys distributed at the end of each educator-evaluation training session. We will begin to share some of the aggregate data from the exit surveys and our responses and next steps where applicable. Please read below for a few highlights from the Module 1 exit surveys:

64 percent of Teacher Evaluators reported that they are confident or very confident that the Rhode Island Model will help them determine the effectiveness of teachers in their district. An additional 31 percent felt somewhat confident.

65 percent of Teacher Evaluators reported that they understand the training and support they will receive from RIDE.

70 percent of Building Administrator Evaluators are confident that the Rhode Island Model will help them determine the effectiveness of building administrators in their schools.

74 percent of Building Administrator Evaluators agree or strongly agree that they feel prepared to conduct Beginning-of-Year Conferences.

When asked, "What recommendations can you make to improve this training in the future?," many participants requested more opportunities to have their questions answered by RIDE staff members.

In response to the Module 1 survey results, RIDE is taking the following next steps:

RIDE has compiled frequently asked questions from teachers about the Rhode Island Model. Two new FAQ documents (one is focused on Student Learning Objectives) can be found at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/RIModelFAQ.aspx>

RIDE is scheduling regular call-in sessions to allow educators in the field to get immediate responses to their questions about the Rhode Island Model. We will be sharing additional information about the call-in sessions in next week's field notes.

For all future training sessions, registered participants will now receive an e-mail with additional details about the session and the session PowerPoint attached.

RIDE is continuing to add additional resources and guidance to the Educator Evaluation Web page, including new Student Learning Objective samples and updated Rhode Island Model forms in both PDF and Word.

From other government agencies:

15. Students invited to enter contest for Christopher Columbus Awards

Please see this notice from the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation, and feel free to share this information with your community:

The Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation, a Federal government agency, is pleased to announce the national Call for Entries for the 2011-2012 ***Christopher Columbus Awards*** program. Now in its 16th year, the awards challenge 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students to explore opportunities for positive change in their communities.

The program is free to enter. All relevant information about how to enter the competition, including the Entry Components and Checklist, Entry Forms, Student Guide, and Coach's/Teacher's Guide, are available online at:

www.christophercolumbusawards.com.

The deadline for receipt of the complete entry packet is **Monday, February 6, 2012**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Stephanie Hallman, at: (800) 291-6020, ext. 3154 or at shallman@mmseeducation.com.

Other:

16. Schools invited to apply for arts grants; workshop scheduled on applications

Please see this notice from VSA arts Rhode Island:

VSA arts Rhode Island is pleased to announce the availability of *Access the Arts Grants* to provide artist-in-residence programs that benefit students with disabilities, grades K through 12. *Access The Arts* is offering funding awards of up to \$2,500 to schools throughout Rhode Island for inclusive and integrated art projects supported in partnership with RIDE.

VSA arts Rhode Island is a statewide nonprofit arts and education organization providing programs and opportunities for persons with disabilities to actively participate in the Rhode Island cultural community. As an educational affiliate of The Kennedy Center, VSA arts RI provides educators, parents and artists with resources to support accessible and inclusive arts education in schools and community sites.

The purpose of the *Access the Arts Grants* is to provide students with disabilities the opportunity to explore their creative talents, work with professional artists in intensive “hands-on” art experiences, and participate more fully with their peers in their communities. Projects in all art forms - drama, creative writing, dance, music, visual and media arts - are appropriate.

In this difficult economic time, *Access The Arts* offers Rhode Island schools increased opportunities to provide standards-based arts education and meet the priorities set by the “Transforming Education In Rhode Island” Strategic Plan. Prospective applicants, artists, and school personnel are invited to attend an orientation workshop for assistance in planning, designing, and completing an application for funding on Thursday, November 10, from 4 - 5:30 p.m. at Independence Square, 500 Prospect St., Pawtucket.

VSA arts Rhode Island's *Access the Arts* program is funded by a grant from RIDE. It is designed to improve both the quality and quantity of arts experiences available to students with disabilities while reinforcing the core curriculum and educational goals of the participant schools.

Application and guidelines are also available at:

www.vsartsri.org

The application deadline is Friday, December 12, at 4 p.m.

17. Grants available for social-emotional health interventions

Please see this notification from the Center for Research in Emotional and Social Health:

The 2012 Grants Program from the Center for Research in Emotional and Social Health (CRESH) will be open at the end of this month. The grants, up to \$1,000, may be used to

make evidence-based interventions for social-emotional health available for children and families.

CRESH grants are open to individuals and organizations that provide direct service to children and families, including teachers, schools, and school district personnel; community health providers; clinicians in private practice; and others in the health, human services, and educational fields.

Grant applications will be evaluated for their likely impact on children's social-emotional health, the degree to which the benefits can be measured, the overall feasibility of the project, and likelihood that the evidence-based intervention will be sustained over time.

The window for submitting grant applications will be open from October 30 to December 11. Award notifications will be made in late January 2012.

For more information about the CRESH 2012 Grants Program, and to submit an application, please visit:

<http://www.cresh.org/apply>.

CRESH is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the emotional and social health of children, adolescents and adults. CRESH conducts research on a wide variety of emotional and social health topics including bully prevention, social skill development, social and emotional learning, violence prevention, and emotional literacy. Support for the research projects at CRESH comes from donations as well as funding through the federal government and private foundations.

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>